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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

SUBJECT Neues Deutschland: Organizational and Personnel Changes

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1. During the 28th Plenary Session of the SED Central Committee, Neues Deutschland, newspaper of the SED Central Committee, called a meeting of the leading editorial employees of the paper.¹ The editors of the Bezirk offices (Bezirksausstellungen) were also invited to attend. Axen began the meeting with a recapitulation of the decisions of the 28th Plenary Session of the SED Central Committee. He added nothing new to that already known to the assembly.

2. After this political introduction, Axen stated that some changes would be made in the operation of the newspaper. He said that in the future the members of the Kollegium would no longer be responsible for the whole paper but each member would have a specific area assigned to him for which he would assume full responsibility. Axen added that it is impossible for one person to be responsible for the entire paper and cited Georg Stibi, the former editor-in-chief, as the best example of his thesis. He stated that Stibi had been overworked and consequently had made political and organizational mistakes which had been detrimental to the proper carrying out of the tasks assigned the paper.

3. It was then announced that the leading organs of Neues Deutschland would consist of a Kollegium, a chief editorial board (Chefredaktion), and a Secretariat. These are to be staffed as follows:

Chief Editorial Board:

- Hermann Axen, editor-in-chief
- Georg Hansen, deputy editor-in-chief
- Dr. Guenther Lortzsch, deputy editor-in-chief
- Hertert Kopietz

Kollegium:

- Axen
- Hansen
- Lortzsch
- Kopietz
- Willi Buchler
- Stefan Schulerich

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- g. Walter Florath²
- h. Three unidentified individuals from East German factories.

Secretariat:

- a. Willi Koehler, chief
- b. Wilhelm Siebenmorgen, secretary
- c. Guenter Fleischmann, secretary
- d. Herbert Salac,³ secretary
- e. Leben (fnu - phonetic), secretary
- f. Rudolf Reinhardt, acting secretary

4. The most startling innovation made by Axen is the inclusion of Florath, formerly SED BPO (Betriebsparteiorganisation - Enterprise Party Organization) Secretary in VdB Elektro-Apparate-Werk "J. W. Stalin", Berlin-Treptow, and of three further individuals from production areas in the Kollegium. This step has caused considerable bitterness among the editorial employees of the paper. Grete Klemm, currently Florath's secretary, stated that he could not even dictate a letter, much less write an editorial.

5. Krause (fnu) of the East German Press Association (Presseverband) revealed that these four individuals were given membership in this association on orders of the SED Central Committee. He stated that there would be a revolt in the association if word of this arbitrary action became known. He complained that it was unfair that young journalists had to pass a difficult examination to be taken into the association while these four had their membership handed to them.

Eberhard Heinrich, member of the new Kollegium, has stated that not one of these four individuals comes close to being a journalist and added that he feels they can only do harm to the paper. He also added that, if the current trend continues on Neues Deutschland, he will resign.

6. Willi Koehler, when asked a technical question by one editorial staff employee, told the employee: "Go ask Florath. He's the responsible man now." Koehler is especially angered by the inclusion of the four non-journalists in the Kollegium since he feels that he has lost his post as deputy editor-in-chief as a result of the new reorganization. According to the rules of the Press Association, the chief of the Secretariat of a newspaper is automatically also deputy editor-in-chief. Neues Deutschland editorial staff employees are speculating as to the reasons why Koehler no longer holds this post.

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8. Ludwig Kempelburg, formerly Kollegium member for economic matters, is currently in the USSR with a touring East German economic study group. It is generally believed in Neues Deutschland that he was given this assignment so that he could be eased out of the paper. He will not return to the newspaper after the trip to the USSR is over.

9. Georg Stibi, former editor-in-chief of the paper, will undertake a one-year study trip for Neues Deutschland to as yet unknown foreign countries.

10. Georg Krause, formerly a member of the Kollegium of Neues Deutschland, has definitely retired from the paper and now does only free-lance writing.

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1. [] Comment: Although Axen officially took over as editor-in-chief on 15 July 1956, he failed to call this meeting until this date because he was absent most of the first two weeks []

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2. [] Comment: Florath was co-opted into the SED Bezirk Directorate Berlin in August 1953 and was appointed a candidate of the Office (Buero) of the Bezirk Directorate in May 1954.

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3. [] Comment: Salac, formerly BGL (Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitung-Enterprise Union Directorate) chairman of Neues Deutschland, now fulfills the role of "planner" formerly carried out by Herbert Kopietz.

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